(d) whether Air India will continue to offer such innovative schemes in future; and

(e) what steps are being taken to make travel by Air India more attractive?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) A total number of 3720 passengers availed themselves of the benefit of the scheme which was offered to First and Executive Class passengers only.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Air India has earned additional revenue of Rs. 407.77 lakhs due to this scheme.

(d) and (e) Air India launches various attractive marketing initiatives/schemes at regular intervals.

High priority programme for air traffic managements at major airports

650.SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Airports Authority of India has prepared any plan on high priority basis for air traffic management at major airports of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Ahmedabad International Airport which is lacking the International Standard is also included in this high priority programme of air traffic management;

(d) if so, the details of programme; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) and (b) In addition to modernisation of air traffic system at Delhi and Mumbai, navigation and surveillance systems are being upgraded by installation of Secondary Surveillance Radars at Chennai, Calcutta, Trivandrum, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Guwahati, Nagpur, Varanasi and Bhubaneshwar. Installation work is in progress at Chennai and Calcutta and the system has been installed at Hyderabad, Guwahati and Trivandrum.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. At Ahmedabad airport, Airport Surveillance Radar, Monopulse Secondary Surveillance Radar, and extended range ground to air VHF communication equipment will be installed.

(e) Does not arise.

Communication from the Federation of Indian Exporters for Readjustment of Rupee

651.SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE to pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that exports have come down by 10.8% in April which is historic decline and, if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(b) whether Government have received any communication from the Federation of Indian Exporters for readjustment of the rupee in the wake of continual flow of dollars through portfolio investments, and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) As per the latest information from DGCI&S exports during April, 1997 showed a decline of 9.9% over April, 1996. While slow down in the growth rate of world trade and sector specific problems are the major reasons, the transporters strike which lasted more than a week is believed to have affected movement of export goods and hence export performance.

(b) The Federation of Indian Export Organisation has called for readjustment of the value of the rupee in the wake of the continuous flow of dollars through portfolio investments and also in the light of the devaluation effected in the prominenet Asian countries like Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia and China as also the indirect devaluation of some of the European currencies against US dollar.

(c) The implications of the hardening of the rupee, are many and have to be viewed in the context of the high import intensity of India's exports, possible competitive devaluation by

other competitioners; elasticity of demand for India's exports, etc, among other factors.

Non-Tariff Barrier Affecting Export

652. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the countries with have imposed non-tariff barrier which have hit products' export; and

(b) the remedial measures taken to improve export performance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIH): (a) and (b) The Government has identified Non-Tariff Barriers imposed by India's Major Trading Partners. These include USA, European Union, Japan, Hong Kong UAE and Saudi Arabia, Russia, Singapure, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Australia, South Korea, Malaysia, China and Canada. Such barriers include textiles quotas, anti-dumping and counter-vailing duties, strict standards relating to health and environment etc. Most of such protectionist measures are consistant with the relevant GATT/WTO Agreements. Nevertheless, the non-tariff barriers identified by us are taken up bilaterally with our trading partners to ensure that market access of Indian exporter is not unreasonably hindered by these trading partners. In case of any inconsistency or discrimination, India has a right to approach the WTO dispute settlement mechanism for redressal.

Procurement of Basmati Rice by MMTC

653. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation of India Limited has entered into an agreement for procurement of Basmati rice and processing;

(b) if so, the details of the agreement thereof;

(c) whether MMTC has suffered a loss of about four crores in this transaction;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(e) whether Government had instituted any enquiry into this deal and fixed up any responsibility on the officers who signed that agreement; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. MMTC entered into an agreement with M/s. K J International for procurement of paddy for Basmati rice and processing it into finished rice for export. A quantity of 3784.45 MT valued at Rs. 3.97 crores was procured. They were required to give 1740.85 MT 'A' grade Superior Basmati rice. Out of this they gave 273 MT of 'A' Grade rice which was sold locally for Rs. 53 lakh. They also informed that they have exported 1000 MT 'A' Grade rice valued at Rs. 1.95 crores to Saudi Arabia.

(c) and (d) The matter has been referred to Arbitration. The quantum of loss, if any, would be known only after the Arbitration proceedings are completd.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. An inquiry has been instituted and report awaited.

Value of goods Exported during the last Six Months

654. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total value of goods exported from the country during the last six months;

(b) whether our exports registered a decline during this period vis-a-vis the corresponding period last year;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to augment India's export?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) As per DGCI&S data the value of goods exported from the country during December 1996 to May 1997 stood at US $ 17393 million, regisering a decline of 2.1% over the corresponding period (December 1995 to May 1996) in the last year.